SPEECH OF MR. BRODHEAD. OF PENNSYLVANIA,

On the Public Lands-Graduation and Reduction of the price thereof, preferable to grants of alternate sections to aid in the construction of railroads—grants to actual settlers, cession to the States, &c., briefly considered.

IN THE SENATE, MARCH 15, 1852.

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Mr. BRODHEAD said: It is not my purpose, Mr. President, to make what is called a regular speech. As the votes are about to be taken on this model and pioneer bill, I only design briefly to explain those I am about to give, and the substitute I am about to propose. The points and propositions which will control my action upon this and the many other similar bills granting alternate sections of the public lands, five miles on each side of the road, (and doubling the price of those retained,) for the purpose of aiding in the construction of railroads, I may discuss fully hereafter. I will do little more than state them now.

Much interest is felt, not only in the new but in the Much interest is felt, not only in the new but in the old States, in regard to the public lands. Now that the slavery question seems to be settled, agitation in regard to the public lands has commenced. A contest between the old and the new States, now threatened, should be avoided, and the questions settled upon just, equitable, and constitutional principles.

I cannot vote for these alternate-section railroad bills

for several reasons, although I would like to do so very for several reasons, although I would like to do so very much to accommodate the amiable, talented, and accomplished representatives from Iowa, (Messrs. Dodge and Jones,) whose bill is now under consideration. I feel embarrassed, because my heart is on one side and my judgment and duty as a Senator on the other.

Five propositions are now before Congress upon the subject of the public lands. Debate has been had upon all and bills submitted to carry some into effect.

all, and bills submitted to carry some into effect:

1. To grant alternate sections to aid in the construction of railroads. Fifteen millions of acres per annum would

thus be taken for years to come.

2. To divide them in kind among all the States—the old States taking as much as are given to the new ones, for purposes of internal improvement.
3. To give them to actual settlers. About four millions

of acres per annum would thus be taken. Adopt this plan, and continue the issue of land warrants now authorized by law to the soldiers, and very little revenue will be received from the sales of the public lands, and the expenses of the land system will be thrown upon the Treasury.

4. To cede them to the States in which they lie.

To cede them to the States in which they he.
To graduate and reduce the price.
These alternate-section bills do not commend themselves to my favorable consideration, because—

They connect this Government with a system of incommendation. ternal improvements which, in my opinion, involves a ne-cessity for a latitudinous construction of the Constitution violative of its principles. They provide for an internal-improvement system in disguise. It is an oblique mode

improvement system in disguise. It is an object of legislation.

2. These bills, if passed, will derange our admirable land system, which has worked so well for many years past, and bring numerous applicants here for years to come. They are local and partial in their character, and will change the course of settlement from one part of a State to another. They do not provide general "rules and the course of settlement from one part of a state to another.

and regulations."

3. They assert the principle that this Government can aid works of internal improvement in States where there are public lands, and cannot where there are none. are public lands, and cannot where there are none.

4. In point of fact, they provide for a partial distribution of the public lands injurious to the old States, and portions of the new ones, through which the roads do not pass. Besides, they facilitate the creation of monopolies; for as soon as the grants are made to the States, as in the case of the Illinois grant, they are forthwith transferred

5. The public lands have cost this Government, composed of all the States, large sums of money, and large sums have been received therefor. The records show that sums have been received therefor. The records show that we have received nearly as much as we have paid out, provided the Indian annuities, and Indian department, and Indian wars are not taken into consideration. The account is pretty nearly balanced, and there remains vast quantities unsold. It is estimated that we have about fourteen hundred millions of acres, including the Indian territory, undisposed of. In view of the increasing strength of the Western country, and of the fact that many of our lands have been a long time in market, and the States

of the Western country, and of the fact that many of our lands have been a long time in market, and the States cannot tax them; and in view of many other considerations, I think it is proper to graduate and reduce the price thereof, not only to actual settlers, but generally.

6. Graduate and reduce the price of the public lands, and leave the construction of railroads, &c., as in the old States, to State and individual enterprise. This plan is simple; it furnishes cheap homes to poor settlers, promotes good feeling among the States, abates the tendency to centralization, prevents monopolies, and is free from constitutional objections. Our land system presents other questions besides those of money and finance.

These are some of the large objectiohs which I have to these alternate-section bills. They are decided, radical, and constitutional, and such as in my judgment outweigh any considerations of public policy which may be urged in their behalf.

My objections, if good, are equally decisive against the amendment of the honorable Senator from Kentucky. That provides for an equal grant to the old States for

and constitutional, and such as in my judgment ontweigh and constitutional and search and constitutional and

We are told that progress is an empty word; that it means every thing, or that it means nothing. Not so, sir. It may be shadowy, indefinite as that mysterious, uncer-tain future to which it refers, and in which it lives. It is It may be shadowy, indefinite as that mysterious, uncertain future to which it refers, and in which it lives. It is no fixed measure or series of measures; it is a spirit, a vivifying principle. Why, Mr. Chairman, he who preaches content preaches a false philosophy. He who tells us to be satisfied with the present existing state of things at any time will teach in vain. That restless, dissatisfied spirit—that irrepressible longing after something new, something better in the future—that never-dying hope, urging us ever onward, was implanted in us by Him who made us doubtless to induce us to seek a better world than this; and inherent and ineradicable as it is in man, it manifests itself in all with which he has to do, in every relation in which he is called to act, individual, social, and political. I believe there is an idea generally prevalent at the present time in the country that a new era has arisen—that another political cycle has revolved itself—that new measures must be adopted, new principles evolved, perhaps new attitudes and relations of parties. The time has come, as I humbly conceive, in the convictions of the American people, when we should stop and inquire whether there is in this country a party, in any or all political organizations, in whatever geographical section, with sufficient power to control the destinies of the country, and having a sincere love and admiration for the constitution, the whole constitution, in all of its parts and and provisions, and a living faith in the Union and its permanency, who are ready to act upon that faith, and, so acting, to go on in the development of the happiness

And the contribution of a property of the contribution of the cont

There is no extraction. The product of the street of the s

is a constraint of the Government. In the latter, it will be carefully watched and guarded against, as it should be carefully watched and guarded against, as it should be, by the various local and rival interests to be affected. Sir, from my limited reading of history I feel warranted in a sying—and, if time allowed, i might cite examples even with the learned Senator from Michigan—that if ever the fate of all past republics should become the fate of our own; if ever the liberties of this people shall be trampled under the iron heel of military despotism, it will be upon the basis of federal consolidation, and through the means of foreign war. How indispensable, then, was it is was, self-defensive, unaggressive, the Constituted as it was, self-defensive, unaggressive, the Constitution being formed, as it describes itself, for the "common defence," to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

I will not go back to search the writings of Washington, with those gentlemen who have taken extracts wrested of from their context, and perveted from their true meaning, to make him a witness against himself. Let that be conseded for the present which they so earnestly demand, either that he was too short-sighted to foresee the fate of things which has now arisen, or that, not dare that the theory of the country for his own time. I care not for that. They tell us that we were then weak, and comparatively rowerless, and though a carefully readed to the genuine spirit of progress in tithan all the fine harangues about the principles of universal, there is more of the genuine spirit of progress in tithan all the fine harangues about the principles of universal humanity, of liberty, fraternity, equality—of Hungarian. The fare-seeing eye of Hongarian. Prench, or Italian independence. The fare-seeing eye of Hongarian. Prench, or Italian independence. The fare-seeing eye of Hongarian. The their the test of all past republics should be one more bound of the ment, i.e. if there should be apout the fate of the